

Learning to Hunt

Hosting a hunting-based outdoor skills event in your community



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Credits

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Pass it on!

Wildlife conservation projects

Participants get involved in one or more wildlife-related conservation projects of their choice.



Station 25

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Objectives

Participants shall:

Describe how hunters have helped pay for wildlife conservation for decades.

Describe some of the annual conservation projects your organization conducts.

Select and complete a local conservation project in their community.

Equipment

Equipment will vary depending on the project selected.

Station Setup

Your station setups will vary depending the wildlife conservation projects you select.

Background Information

In order for youngsters to become responsible hunter-conservationists, they need to develop a sense of wildlife stewardship in addition to honing their hunting skills and woodcraft. They need to understand the responsibility they have to give something back to wildlife and the natural world.

Hunters have been the backbone of wildlife conservation for more than a century. They have been its primary financial supporters for decades. Each state's fish and wildlife department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service coordinate today's wildlife conservation programs. These programs add up to a huge undertaking involving thousands of professional men and women who work as caretakers for the mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and even insects and plants that live or breed here. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year managing these wild populations.

Who pays for all this conservation? The largest group of people who pay for wildlife conservation is hunters and anglers. Unlike other state governmental agencies, like the Departments of Health and Social Services, or Agriculture, the



Wildlife Management Programs of most state conservation agencies are funded almost entirely by hunters. The wildlife management programs receive very little general revenue...or taxes... paid by the general public. Hunters and anglers across the United States pay for conservation each time they purchase a hunting license, a firearm or ammunition...about \$3 millions each DAY.

Nearly 1 billion dollars of hunting license fees are collected each year through the combined efforts of all 50 state wildlife agencies. In addition to these license dollars hunters pay a special 11 percent excise tax—established back in 1937 through the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act—each time they buy a new sporting firearm or a box of ammunition. This act was strongly supported by hunters and today it continues to provide important support for wildlife conservation, wildlife research, and the purchase of over 4 million acres of wildlife refuges, public hunting grounds, wetlands and wintering ranges. Both hunters and non-hunting outdoor recreationists benefit by having these state-owned recreation ground available for their use.

Hunters also pay for waterfowl management each time they hunt ducks. Every waterfowl hunter must purchase a federal (as well as

a state) migratory waterfowl stamp...colloquially called the Federal Duck Stamp. These dollars are used to purchase or lease wetlands for ducks and geese. Since many non-game types of wildlife use these wetlands, hunters are also providing them a helping hand, as well.

Finally, hunters contribute financially toward wildlife conservation by participating in their local chapter of national wildlife conservation organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, Whitetails Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League and many more.



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Activity

Procedure

Before beginning this activity, review the substantial contributions made by hunters toward wildlife conservation. Refer to the background information above. Then, discuss some of the project options and select one to work on as a group. There are many different kinds of conservation projects from which to choose. Here is a list of just some ideas:

- ☐ Build and erect nestboxes (wood duck, bluebird, squirrel...).
- ☐ Build and erect mallard nesting cylinders.
- ☐ Build and erect Canada Goose nest structures.
- ☐ Spruce-up and fix-up your club's shooting range.
- ☐ Help restore a local area to a native prairie, woodland, or wetland.

- ☐ Build, erect and maintain wildlife feeders at a private nature center.
- ☐ Build, erect and maintain nestboxes and bird feeders at a local nursing home.
- ☐ Take a field trip to a local wildlife area to learn how DNR manages wildlife.
- ☐ Help maintain hunting or nature trails on DNR or other public lands.
- ☐ Get involved in the Day-Old-Chick program and raise and release pheasants in the local area.
- ☐ Plant trees and shrubs for wildlife at a local park.
- ☐ Work with a local school to help them plan and establish an outdoor classroom by planting trees, shrubs, prairie and digging a pond.
- ☐ Pick up litter along a road or nature trail and discuss how litter can injure wildlife.
- ☐ Build a wildlife observation platform for a public property.
- ☐ Create wildlife-related Christmas ornaments or wildlife shaped cookies to sell as a fund-raiser for another wildlife project.
- ☐ Build nestboxes to sell as a wildlife conservation project fundraiser.
- ☐ Sell bird seed as a fund raiser.



- ☐ Contact a local wildlife manager and ask what type of wildlife surveys (frog and toad surveys, ruffed grouse surveys or pheasant surveys) they could get involved in.
- ☐ Woodchip or brush out a nature trail.
- ☐ Adopt an Eagle –contact Bureau of Endangered Resources (608) 266-7012
- ☐ Adopt a Swan—contact Bureau of Endangered Resources (608) 266-7012
- ☐ Adopt a Loon—contact Bureau of Endangered Resources (608) 266-7012
- ☐ Adopt a Wolf— contact Bureau of Endangered Resources (608) 266-7012
- ☐ Hold a car wash to raise money for the Endangered Resources Program and handout brochures about the Endangered Resources Wolf License Plate.
- ☐ Start a youth volunteer naturalist program in your community.



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- ❑ Help control exotics such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, purple loosestrife, or garlic mustard on public or private lands.
- ❑ Contact the DNR Bureau of Integrated Science Services to obtain information about collecting data for the Summer Deer Observation survey.
- ❑ Invite representatives from conservation organizations, colleges of natural resources, or local nature centers to talk about their conservation efforts and how kids can help with these projects.

The list of conservation activities is limited only by your imagination.

The most important thing to remember is that if hunting is to remain a proud tradition and have a strong future into the 21st century, conservation groups must reach out and get kids and adult novice hunters involved....involved in hunting, involved in conservation projects, and involved in your organization's monthly activities.


End of Teaching Station

